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Earlier, at the reception, I made a few remarks, preparatory to awarding the prizes. They were:

"We welcome the Secretary of State for Air and Mrs. Amery. As you know, Mr. Amery has just returned from an extensive tour of the United States, where he visited many Air Force installations and conferred with the key officials in the Department of Defense and the Air Force. We thank Mr. Amery for taking the time out of his overcrowded schedule to be with us here this evening.

The effectiveness of any armed force must in considerable measure depend upon its relationship with the local populations where it is operating. This is true when the force is in its own homeland, but it is especially vital when it is stationed abroad. As our two nations are basically non-military societies, the problem of accommodating in a community large groups of military and their dependents is no mean task.

I take pride in stating that the relations between the military contingents of the United States in the United Kingdom and the civilian population are excellent. There are, of course, problems that we know only too well. They are often serious and must be regarded as such, but, overall, I believe the harmony between the American forces here and the British public is unprecedented; I congratulate British and Americans alike for this accomplishment.

The selection of winning bases is difficult; this year it was impossible to pick any station that was outstandingly above the others. Consequently, there is a tie for first place."

Amery responded. He [redacted] is an attractive man. His wife also has much charm. According to gossip, their life has been pretty ghastly since the execution of his brother for treason.

[redacted] DATE 6-17-81

February 2, 1962 - Friday

E and I flew to Rome this morning, to stay with Ashley Clarke. We landed on the new Leonardo da Vinci Airport. The selection of the site, and its construction, have given rise to a juicy Italian scandal. Some government officials are alleged to have profited largely by the operation. Be that as it may, it is a fine port, with a tremendous modern passenger building. Ashley met us, and we whizzed into town. This afternoon, he took us for an extended tour of famous monuments.

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Baltimore, Richmond, St. Louis, Columbus, Niagara Falls, like an uncontrollable cataract. Each stop was an event in the civic life of the community visited. Almost as widely known, by his writings, in America as in the United Kingdom, politicians, critics, publicans, and sinners prostrated themselves in praise of his precocious talent. The incense was heady, his acceptance of it gracious.

He must, in his kaleidoscopic sojournings, have nurtured a scorn of social conditions, which, though pleasing in application to himself, embodied evils to which he was especially hostile.

I do not wish to deal in superficialities. Dickensonians here tonight may, I am sure, dispute my interpretation of the reasons for the passion with which he assailed American life.

The impressions made upon him were fleeting. He passed, like a summer cloud, in slow locomotion, over half a continent. One night, he was comfortable in Baltimore's Barnum's Hotel, a few days later he was devoured by bedbugs in a Mid-western hostelry. On occasion, he slept upon a bare board, sandwiched between an obese drunkard and a snoring backwoodsman.

There is no evidence that he did not take the rough with the smooth, or resented having his beard grow for lack of shaving water.

Yet, in retrospect, the author who had spent much of his time in the United States visiting insane asylums, schools for the blind, and penitentiaries, in many of which he found the administration and humanities superior to what he had witnessed on the London scene, finally concentrated the bulk of his criticism on two American customs: (1) Tobacco chewing; (2) Slavery.

I can well imagine his antipathy to the former. When I was a boy in Virginia, the local railroad trains were still, as in Dickens' day, furnished, in the center of each car, with a stove, red-hot from wood fires. Stolid men, sweeping aside their moustaches or beards--often they neglected to do so--would expectorate, sometimes from incredible distances, tobacco juice, and make it fall with a sizzling ring upon the brazier.

In the hall, even in the bedrooms, of the most superior hotels in tobacco districts, spittoons, in the shape of derby hats, or of other design, were as much in evidence as other necessities. Tales were told, and championships won, of marksmen who, at ten paces, could annihilate a fly with an accurate jet.

Dickens found this disgusting, but had refrained from comment upon such customs while he was a guest in America.

His second, and more important, criticism of the United State s was inspired by his detestation of the institution of slavery. Gifted as he was, he never denounced slavery in as moving terms as did the brilliant Fanny Kemble, whose recollections of her stay on a Georgia plantation have recently been republished in England, but what he saw of it moved him to an indigation even greater than that aroused in him by the inequalities of life in England.

I shall say no more on this subject. Dickens' return to the United States in 1868 was a triumph. He remains today, in America, one of the best-loved authors who has ever employed the English language.

I propose to you the toast:

"To Dickens and America"

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association, embracing Europe, Great Britain and certain Commonwealth countries, the United States, Latin America and others.

What forms such an affiliation might take will ~~only~~ be disclosed in the fulness of time. As in many other problems confronting democracies, no easy or quick solutions are indicated. Patience in international policy, not only is necessary, but usually indispensable. Voters demand panaceas; all too often competent politicians are turfed out of office for failure to supply them. Man is by nature overinclined to blame his ills, personal or national, on others. The Soviets do not labor under such limitations. Patience in implementing policy, has been of signal service to them. A year, a decade, a generation, of disappointment, does not deflect them from an appointed course.

Hovering over all our international concerns, is the menace of nuclear destruction. Although the variety, number, and lethal effect of American nuclear weapons is almost certainly superior to Soviet capability in this field, a resort to their use would bring about little, if anything, short of a universal holocaust.

Ironically enough, I find my Government often assailed by critics for unwillingness to disarm unilaterally, or for refusing to renounce its freedom to renew nuclear testing in the atmosphere if circumstances are judged by it to make such action imperative.

I do not want to inflict on you any cheap claptrap on this subject. Nevertheless, it does appear to me somewhat inane to conclude that because of the United States ~~preferring, by keeping ahead of the Soviets in an unwanted~~

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to other special areas of interest; we try to match the traveler with our expert. In cases in which we do not know the Congressional traveler's interest but only want to make sure that he is given the degree of attention which he might expect, we use members of a team of three Americans in the Personnel section as greeters. These hard-worked people sometimes go to the airport as often as three times a day.

We realize how important it is for the Department to render appropriate courtesies to Congressional travelers, and we have thought that the system established here over the years has been effective in this respect. I would greatly appreciate it if you should advise me of any evidence to the contrary. We would like to do even better. However, I do not believe that my frequent attendance at the London Airport waiting for an individual whom I have never met, and who may not be on the aircraft when it arrives, is desirable. The same observation applies, in my opinion, to the Deputy Chief of Mission. With this Embassy, as in Paris and perhaps elsewhere, travel is Big Business, and we must maintain an efficient machine to do the work.

With kind personal regards,

Most sincerely,

David Bruce
American Ambassador

P.S. As a matter of comment, I have received, since my arrival in March to the end of 1961, 277 Congressional requests by letter and telegram, exclusive of those dealing with visas. This is at a rate of one a day. Each one asks for the performance of some particular action on my part. Handling such requests is not only a duty but a pleasure, especially since many of them come from old friends who are Members of Congress.

The number of other Congressional items, not directly involving me, during the same nine month's period, was in the neighborhood of 375. These entailed not only about 375 original replies, but, since most of these letters concerned visa and citizenship cases, the Embassy sent from three to five follow-up letters or forms on each such case.

MIN:LewisJones:mc

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